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ABSTRACT

Components of a student retention program at Eastern Michigan University are examined; for each effort to improve retention, project objectives and design, results, and recommendations are presented. Retention initiatives, decided upon as a result of a campus-wide mobilization of effort, include: a student-focused orientation system, a fast track program that consists of a one-day, individualized opportunity for freshmen students and their parents; an orientation pre-session (before fall classes) that involves program modules such as academic success, careers, personal choices and changes, and campus involvement; an ongoing orientation course for first-time college students that is designed to improve student ajustment and to enhance retention of high-risk groups; residence halls for freshmen that provide special support; a research project to identify freshmen with potential adjustment problems; an academic department retention followup project that determines students' intent to return to the university for the next year; a program that provides incentives for early registration; a project to identify the benefits of student involvement in the campus community; a student leadership development project; and a staff development program that emphasizes institutional policies. (SW)

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THE SUCCESSFUL MOBILIZATION OF A CAMPUS COMMUNITY FOR STUDENT RETENTION

REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY RETENTION STEERING COMMITTEE

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
YPSILANTI

1985

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Eastern Michigan University

Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

March, 1985

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

During the 1979-80 academic year, the Eastern Michigan University Board of Regents adopted six goals designed to meet the challenge of the University's mission for the 1980's. One goal states that:

> "The University must be responsive to the changing needs and desires of all enrolled student groups,"

and has been translated into a principle which directed that "a strategy must be formulated to guarantee that slightly more than 70 percent of the undergraduate student body will re-enroll for the next fall semester."

There are very few institutions within higher education that could afford to be so direct in stating a specific target for responding to the complex issues underlying student attrition and persistence. Eastern Michigan University has distinguished itself with a record of setting demanding goals and then meeting them through strong leadership, enthusiastic management and collaboration.

The standard had been set at the top of the organization with the initiative of President John W. Porter. The creativity and energy necessary to succeed, however, had to surface from throughout the organization. A campus-wide approach, designed to mobilize all parts of the University community, was initiated.

In October 1982, the University Retention Steering Committee was formed. Its membership included executive officers of the University, key administrators, representatives of the Faculty Senate, Student Government, and select staff from the several University divisions. The Steering Committee encouraged the emergence of initiatives for action from within the institution.

In Spring 1983, the President and Board authorized several initiatives recommended by the University Retention Steering Committee that were planned to accomplish the Eastern Michigan University goal of student retention. Since the original initiatives were launched, a second wave of of retention programming has emerged. The Fast Track, Pre-Session and other initiatives now comprise a multi-faceted strategy for attraction and retention.

Office of Vice President for Student Affairs
(313) 487-2390

We can now report that the average retention rate over the last three years has exceeded our goal of 70 percent. There is evidence that some of the initiatives have worked exactly as planned. Others may require some modification. New initiatives must be evaluated and focused to maintain the overall effectiveness of the effort. In this context, the University has chosen to broaden the discussion of these program innovations to include responses from educators across the campus, the state, and the nation.

Many students, faculty and staff worked on project teams to implement these initiatives, often under tough time and resource constraints. In the process, new communication and management approaches were developed, serving as innovative practices to be applied repeatedly on other projects.

The leadership of our Provost, Ronald Collins, combined with the talent and industry of many others, including Donald Loppnow, Patricia Weber, Glenna Frank Miller, Thomas Gwaltney, Jeffrey Dansky, Mary Kauper, Ann Kettles, Rita Abent, and Jim Vick, to give life and character to these programs. Of particular significance was the role of John Burkhardt, Special Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs. As project director for the University retention initiatives and in the development of this report, John exemplified the creativity, skilled leadership and sense of purpose which characterized this University-wide commitment.

Sincerely,

Laurence Smith

Laurence N. Smith, Chair
Vice President for Student Affairs

UNIVERSITY RETENTION STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Laurence N. Smith, Chair
Vice President for Student Affairs

John Burkhardt
Special Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs

Ronald W. Collins
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Mary Kauper
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Donald Loppnow
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Sandra McClennen
Teacher Education

David Taylor
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James Vick
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APPROACHING RETENTION FROM A CAMPUS-WIDE PERSPECTIVE

The determination to improve student retention at American colleges and universities results from two concerns:

- -Faculty, administrators, staff and students are genuinely concerned about improving the quality of life on the campus for everyone.
- -The well-being of many colleges and universities relates directly to the ability to attract and serve students well.

An understanding of the scholarly literature related to student retention led those of us at Eastern Michigan University to conclude that no single program or adaptation could, by itself, improve campus retention. Only a campus-wide mobilization of effort, focused on improving the quality of University life, could accomplish such a goal. Consequently, an organizational change process was indicated, planned and implemented. The undertaking began with a commitment to influence as many different elements of the University as possible, paying particular attention to those programs and people in direct contact with our student clientele.

The following chapters describe some of the most visible and exciting results of this process. We believe they offer a worthwhile introduction to the retention initiative at this University. What is less easily captured but may be felt beneath the text of this report, is the enormous pride of accomplishment and of community that has emerged by working together for a better future.

"The Fast Track program allows new students to finalize their commitment to Eastern at the earliest possible moment..."

FAST TRACK

Introduction

1. **Who introduced and sanctioned the program?**

   A series of focus groups were used to evaluate traditional orientation programs at the University. The summary of reactions was given to a faculty, staff and student committee charged with developing an orientation system that was genuinely student focused and consistent with University enrollment targets.

2. **When did program planning begin?**

   Concepts were formulated in November, 1983. The project was approved and actual operational development began in February, 1984. The first program began one month later. The excitement of developing and implementing this program at almost the same time gave rise to its name: Fast Track.

3. **What are the specific program objectives?**

   a. Provide a one-day, individualized, take-care-of-business opportunity for freshmen students.

   b. Bring students and parents to the campus together.

   c. Register 1,000 freshmen by April 1
      + 1,000 freshmen by June 30

   d. There is also a program and similar targets for transfer students.

Design

1. **How does the program operate?**

   Students are brought to the campus at 8:00 a.m. and assigned to groups of 5-6. During the day students and parents:

   a. Receive a one-on-one personal interview with an academic advisor.

   b. Sign up for their residence hall room.

   c. Receive an update on their financial aid.

   d. Meet with faculty from their college.

   e. Register for Fall.

   f. Buy Fall semester books (and a lot of T-shirts).

   g. Learn of campus jobs and involvement opportunities.

   h. Tour campus with an upperclassman.

   Students pay $5.00 for lunch. The program costs the University about $30,000 per year.

2. **How have results been measured?**

   Enrollment ran about "six weeks ahead" of normal years during the 1984 cycle. Net enrollment, attributable to many factors, was the highest in the institution's history last Fall. Eastern Michigan has increased its freshmen enrollment in the last several years while all other Michigan institutions have declined.

   Student satisfaction has been very high. The Fast Track program has also allowed us to shift resources away from our traditional orientation programs so that our Leadership Development and Pre-Session programs could be specialized.

   Students bring their parents to campus in about half of the cases (average of .67 parents/student). This has benefitted our Parents Association and cultivation programs.

   The Fast Track program is also a source of great institutional pride and combines the efforts of staff and students from across the University.

"Pre-Session is an orientation to University life designed to maximize each student's likelihood of success..."

THE UNIVERSITY PRE-SESSION

Introduction

The concept of an orientation program for new freshmen occurring before the Fall semester emerged from the Orientation Planning Committee in the Fall 1983. As the Fast Track program was developed with its charge to solidify the conversion of prospective students to attend Eastern by registration of classes, selection of residence hall room, campus tour, campus involvement activity, textbook order, parents program, etc., the past practice of the Summer Orientation Program had less impact.

A full-scale orientation experience for new freshmen was explored with these concepts:

1. The readiness of a new freshman to experience study skill aids, career development, campus exploration, personal growth and campus involvement is never better than immediately before the start of classes.

2. The energy generated by a mass of new freshmen together on the campus and the opportunity to build pride about the institution can only occur in a one-shot, large-scale orientation program. Focus on the Class of '88 and emphasis on completion of college was also possible.

3. The opportunity to use current E.M.U. student leaders as orientation small group leaders (over 100 needed) can only occur immediately before the start of classes. Training of student group leaders could be tied to Student Leadership and Housing Staff training.

4. The use of faculty and staff for orientation presentations is facilitated before the start of classes rather than during spring or summer.

Program planning began in Winter 1984. Review of the literature and use of consultants occurred in Spring 1984. Implementation was designed by a Division of Student Affairs team involving every department and several staff.

Design

The Orientation Pre-Session was scheduled for the days preceding the first day of classes, September 2-4, 1984. Five program modules were designed: 1) Academic Success, 2) Careers Fast Forward, 3) Personal Choices, Challenges and Changes, 4) Eastern Pursuit and 5) Campus Involvement.

Five clusters of freshmen participants were developed clustering participants in natural groups by residence hall assignment or commuter status. Each cluster further subdivided into small groups of 10 freshmen headed by a current E.M.U. student leader. The five clusters rotated through the five program modules on the second and third days of Pre-Session.

The first day of Pre-Session included Housing Move-In, followed by the Pre-Session Convocation and a Student Success presentation. A Help Center was located in the Huron Hideaway for all three days. Social activities included receptions in the Residence Halls and the Eastern Energy Extravaganza in the Rec/Im Building on the evening of the second day.

The cost of the Pre-Session was $19.50 which included the orientation text "Student Success - How to do Better in College and Still Have Time for Your Friends".

Additionally, a special orientation program for Transfer Students, the Transfer Transition '84, occurred in late August 1984.

Results

1,300 new freshmen and 200 transfer students participated in these new orientation programs, exceeding past years' participation by approximately 400. Participants evaluated these new orientation programs very highly, indicating their value in easing the transition to E.M.U. and preparing students for a successful college experience.

Student leaders and D.S.A. staff involved in the Pre-Session were consulted following the program to assist in evaluation.

Recommendations

Orientation Pre-Session and Transfer Transition should be maintained with modifications including the re-arrangement of some scheduled programs, small reduction in presentation time, training of student leaders, and assignment of presentations.

"We were determined to design an Ongoing Orientation Course which combined excitement for students with growth and development for faculty and staff..."

ACADEMICS, AFFILIATION AND ACHIEVEMENT

Introduction

1. **Who introduced and sanctioned the program?**

   The ongoing orientation course was one of several intiatives introduced by a campus-wide University Retention Steering Committee. The concept was sanctioned directly by the Board of Regents and has received support mutually from the Divisions of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Business and Finance.

2. **When did program planning begin?**

   The principal objectives and conceptual content of the ongoing orientation course were outlined in a March 1983 Orientation Think Tank which provided staff and faculty participants an introduction to recognized research in the area of student retention.

3. **When did program implementation begin?**

   The single most compelling output of the Orientation Think Tank was a commitment on the part of participants to pursue the development, design and implementation of an ongoing orientation course for first-time college students entering Eastern Michigan University (FTIAC's). A group of individuals subsequently formed a subcommittee of the University Retention Steering Committee (called the Subcommittee to Design, Develop and Implement an Ongoing Orientation Course) to be chaired by Donald Loppnow (Department Head, Social Work) and Patricia Weber (Associate Dean, College of Business). The Subcommittee first met in June of 1983 and set the ambitious goal of delivering an experimental ongoing orientation course to a selected group of FTIAC's in Fall of 1983.

4. What are the specific objectives of the program?

The specific learning objectives of the ongoing orientation course, itself, are multifaceted and can be referenced in the subcommittee's Interim Report. The programmatic objectives are straightforward:

a. To improve student adaptation to the campus environment and to enhance retention in high-risk groups of FTIAC's (self-selected);

b. To improve staff delivery of services to the student population by sensitizing them to the special needs of FTIAC's.

Design

1. How does program design relate to objectives?

The ongoing orientation course (AAD179: Academics, Affiliation and Achievement) includes learning modules designed to:

-enhance adjustment to the university environnment,

-improve study skills,

-explore multicultural institutions and the history and traditions of higher education, in general, and Eastern Michigan University, in particular, and

-introduce students to campus resources available for identifying personal skills and career goals.

Course participants enroll voluntarily. Thus, the course tends to attract those students who are apprehensive about success in the University. Such students are presumed to be retention risks even though they meet academic standards for admission.

Staff development objectives are met by assigning instructional responsibilities to teaching teams comprised of one faculty member and one staff member (carefully balanced to introduce the students to diverse backgrounds of age, sex, and

ethnic extraction). The interdepartmental teams involve all areas of University administration through staff assignment to the course. Interaction of staff members with primary instructional employees strengthens understanding of the educational function of the University delivery system.

2. **Who is involved in delivery?**

During Fall of 1983, four sections were offered, each staffed by a faculty member teamed with a non-instructional employee. In Fall of 1984, nine sections were offered and similarly staffed. The course is housed in the office of the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and is coordinated by a faculty member on released time. The coordinator (Dr. Thomas Gwaltney, Department of Teacher Education) supervises an Honors Student, who joins him as a staff assistant.

3. **How does the program operate?**

The instructional teams participate in intensive preparation for course delivery, are supported by a resource staff, and are fully responsible for student evaluation. Students enroll in the course as they would for any similar academic offering. They are graded and evaluated by the completion of a variety of projects and examinations which serve to introduce the student to activities, personnel and resources of the University. The course content is meaningful and substantive. Students who are having adjustment problems are identified through such devices as journals and class exercises. These students are actively counseled by the instructional team and given clear guidelines for achievement in the university environment. The students can, indeed, fail the course. However, most set clear and achievable objectives and adapt this pattern to requirements for other courses in order to improve their overall academic and social adjustment.

4. **What does the program cost?**

In Fall, 1983, the University contributed 0.5 FTE through the Academic Affairs Division. Expenses for course development and delivery were absorbed by the departments housing instructional team members, the offices of the co-chairs and the Academic Affairs Divisional office.

In Spring and Summer, 1984, 0.11 FTE was contributed per term (a total of 0.22 FTE) for coordination and training for the Fall, 1984, instructional teams and for course materials development. Fall, 1984, FTE totaled 1.125 committed and 1.00 expended (one section was contributed by an academic administrator). In addition, the following expenses were

incurred:

Instructional handbooks	$3,000
Less: Sale of books	1,000
Net instructional materials	$2,000
Student help	1,400
Supplies	600
	$4,000

Offset by $6,012 minimum in tuition (computed on an in-state base) plus fees generated by enrollments.

Results

1. **How have results been measured?**

   Student impacts have been evaluated in two ways:

   a. Interim retention effects on this high-risk group have been measured against a sample of FTIAC's matched according to class level, sex, age (±2 years), racial/ethnic background and number of credits (±2 credits).

   b. Qualitative testing of matched groups compared knowledge and use of university resources, satisfaction with university support services, academic performance, and an evaluation of the course itself.

   Informal reports have been solicited from both participating students and instructional team members to improve course design and delivery mechanisms.

2. **What impact has this program had on student retention?**

   In a preliminary evaluation of retention for the Fall, 1983, pilot group, 29 students of the 48 who were enrolled in the ongoing orientation course returned in Fall, 1984, to yield a retention rate of 60 percent (a strong performance for this high-risk group). Reasons for attrition of the remaining 19 included both voluntary and involuntary stops. Although this data is based on only a pilot effort, it has delivered a retention rate which compares favorably to the overall national average in a group considered to be high risk.

3. How many students have been affected?

In Fall, 1983, 48 students participated directly in the ongoing orientation course. Another 214 enrolled in the Fall, 1984, experimental sections for a total of 262 participants. The number of students indirectly affected is substantially greater. Anecdotal evidence suggests that enrolled students invited roommates and friends to participate in campus activities and class projects. Further, faculty and staff members of the instructional teams have reported carry-over to other classes to the office setting.

4. What ongoing research is underway?

The fully staffed experimental sections in Fall, 1984, will offer a considerably broader base for evaluating the quantitative impact of the ongoing orientation course on retention of FTIAC's. Again, a direct track of Fall-Winter and Fall, 1984 to 1985 enrollment patterns will be maintained.

Recommendations

The co-chairs of the Subcommittee to Design, Develop and Implement an Ongoing Orientation Course recommend that:

Size

a. The course be continued at its current size;

Content

b. The course content be modified by current instructional team members to benefit from a broader base of experience and expertise;

c. Redundancies with Fast Track and Pre-Session content be eliminated;

d. An enhanced set of instructional materials be developed for a professionally printed student handbook;

e. Supplemental texts be considered;

f. Budget for a bank of instructional resources be provided;

Delivery

g. The instructional team concept be retained with team members from non-academic staffs drawn from among those with high student contact or impact;

h. The participation of non-academic team members be recognized by reduction in load, increase in compensation or addition of temporary support personnel to maintain current workload;

i. Reimbursement of participating academic departments be based upon full-time faculty participation rather than lecture replacement to provide departments an incentive to assign senior faculty to the course;

Administration

j. The course be assimilated into the University curriculum.

-special staffing requirements, selection and training;

-targeted developmental programs to meet freshman student needs;

-specific marketing strategies to incoming freshmen to encourage Freshman Center selection.

The program operates within same budget parameters for other residence halls in the Housing system.

Results

The Freshman Center is a very popular residential option for E.M.U. students. Students indicate great satisfaction with this freshman residential environment specifically related to the shared experiences of the freshman year (classes, social needs, change in family relationships, etc.).

A particularly successful trend has been the return of freshmen from the Freshman Center to the Housing program in subsequent years. Groups of freshmen that have lived together in freshman halls room draw together in upperclass halls, thus maintaining the floor communities that supported them during the freshman year.

Recommendations

The Freshman Center as one of several residential living options at Eastern Michigan University will be maintained.

"The shared living experiences of the freshman year form a bond between students that can help in the transition to college..."

THE FRESHMAN CENTER

Introduction

The concept of residence halls reserved only for freshmen and designed to support developmental needs of freshmen, was implemented at Eastern Michigan University in the Fall of 1973 by the University's Housing Department.

Although the implementation of the Freshman Center concept has evolved over the years, specific objectives for the Center have remained intact and include:

-to provide a residential environment for freshmen that supports the academic mission of the University and its students;

-to provide a residential environment for freshmen that supports the developmental needs of freshmen specifically focused on Academic Success, Career Development and Social Involvement;

-to provide a residential environment for freshmen that encourages retention in school throughout the freshman year and return to E.M.U. and residence halls in subsequent years.

Design

The University Housing Department is charged with the delivery of housing to freshmen.

Current implementation of the Freshman Center concept includes:

-designation of two 300-bed residence halls as Freshman Halls (one for men, one for women);

"Providing help to any student that needs it, not only those with predicted risks, but those who are experiencing an unexpected problem..."

THE EASTERN SUCCESS PROJECT:

A Pilot Early Warning System

Introduction

1. **Who introduced and sanctioned the program?**

   In March, 1983, Eastern Michigan University's Retention Steering Committee recommended the implementation of several pilot programs aimed at improving student retention and persistence. President Porter supported this recommendation and proposed several key initiatives for implementation at the May, 1983 meeting of the Board of Regents. Based on the approval of the President and Regents, the University Retention Steering Committee formed three implementation subcommittees. One subcommittee was charged with designing and implementing a pilot early warning system. The group named its efforts "Eastern Success Project" (ESP).

2. **When did planning begin?**

   Planning began in June, 1983. During the Summer of 1983, ESP Committee members reviewed information relating to student retention, discussed philosophical and ethical issues relating to proposed research strategies and designed the assessment and informational components of the ESP project.

3. **When did program implementation begin?**

   The program was implemented during Fall, 1983.

4. What are the specific objectives of the program?

The formative research project was designed to create a vehicle to identify freshman students with potential adjustment problems which could signal a decision to leave the university. The project assessed whether early identification of adjustment problems combined with varying levels of intervention, could facilitate problem resolution and affect student retention at Eastern. In addition, the project established a data base which permitted evaluation and tracking of a representative sample of freshman students.

Design

1. How does program design relate to objectives?

Past research in student retention suggests that persistence in college relates to satisfactory integration into the university environment. Studies suggest that poor initial academic performance or discrepancies between expectations and actual performance instigate the decision of students to withdraw. Consequently, an "early warning system" was designed to assess freshman student adjustment and assist students designated at risk.

Assessment instruments were designed for faculty and student completion during the critical first half of the semester. A brochure describing University services was also produced for student review. As directed by project design, faculty and students reported on actual grades received during the first half of the semester. Students indicated discrepancies between actual and expected academic performance, and responded to questions about personal adjustment and integration into the University environment. Questionnaire data was reviewed by the ESP Committee for targeting intervention resources. Grades for Fall, 1983 and student re-enrollment patterns for Winter, 1984 were obtained as measures of student retention.

2. Who is involved in delivery?

In addition to the ESP Committee members, faculty from specific classes selected for the study, personnel from Academic Services Center, the Instructional Support Center, Academic Records Office, Registration and from offices within the Division of Student Affairs (Career Services Center, Counseling Services, Dean of Students Office and Special Student Services, Financial Aid, Housing and Food Services),

were involved in delivery of the program and implementing interventions for students at risk.

3. **How does the program operate?**

The participants were 577 FTIAC students enrolled in (randomly) selected sections of freshman courses in four academic departments: Math 104, 105, 120; English 120, 121; Political Science 112; and Communication and Theatre Arts 121. Sections from each department were randomly assigned to research conditions (A, B, or C) displayed in the following table.

TABLE 1

EARLY WARNING SYSTEM PROJECT DESIGN

CONDITION	AGREES TO PARTICIPATE	STUDENT/ FACULTY PROGRESS REPORT	EARLY WARNING PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED	INTERVENTIONS ATTEMPTED
A	YES	YES	YES	YES
B	YES	YES	YES	NO
C	YES	NO	NO	NO

Following questionnaire distribution, the ESP Committee evaluated student and faculty responses, identifying students who met specific intervention criteria. Appropriate interventions were made to remedy problems identified for students in the full treatment condition (A). The study design provided for timely self-help, problem-solving information to students in Group B.

As noted, Fall, 1983 grades and re-enrollment figures for Winter, 1983 were obtained for study participants. Statistical comparisons were reviewed and results analyzed during Winter, 1984.

4. **What does the program cost?**

Start up efforts for the ESP project consumed several hundred hours of volunteer activity by ESP Committee members for the

planning of the project. Faculty and staff provided additional hours for training sessions and to provide the required interventions with students. Although some computer analysis was provided to the Committee, much of our assembled data has not been fully utilized because requested computer support could not be provided. Despite the cost in significant time, the project provided opportunities for cooperative efforts on the part of enthusiastic, dedicated individuals from diverse sectors of the University.

Results

1. **How have the results been measured?**

The research design outlined above allowed for a precise, concrete evaluation of Winter, 1984 re-enrollment for all students in each of the three experimental groups (See Table 2). Fall, 1983 final G.P.A.'s for each group was also examined. Finally, we examined our non-quantifiable impressions of the effects of the program on the numerous faculty and staff members involved in E.S.P.

2 & 3. **What is the impact of this program on student retention at Eastern?**
How many students have been affected?

As shown in Table 2, the return rate for the control group (C) was lower than for either ESP treatment group (A, B).

TABLE 2

ESP STUDENT RETENTION

FROM FALL, 1983 TO WINTER, 1984

GROUP	REGISTERED FALL, 1983	REGISTERED WINTER, 1984	PERCENT RETURNED
A	198	179	90.4
B	200	184	92.0
C	179	157	87.7

Although this difference was small, the return rate of the entire sample was sufficiently high (90.1%) to limit the potential effectiveness of an early warning retention program. It seems that in the Fall of 1983, there was a confluence of positive factors operating at Eastern Michigan University (including ESP) which benefitted re-enrollment patterns for all students.

An analysis of G.P.A. data showed that group assignment did not produce differences for those students returning to Eastern in Winter, 1984. Mean Fall, 1983 G.P.A.'s for Groups A, B and C were 2.42, 2.43 and 2.39 respectively. In contrast, there was a large difference in the grades of non-returning students. Grade point average of Group C students (0.4) was significantly lower than for the other groups (1.1 and 1.1). It may be that the extra attention given to the students in Groups A and B caused some of these students to work harder or to elect to "withdraw passing" from courses prior to leaving the university. Because the G.P.A.'s of non-returning students in the treatment groups were so much higher than those of students in the control group, it may be assumed that some ESP students who did not return in Winter, 1984 will be more likely to "drop-in" again.

Against the backdrop of the modest success summarized thus far, it can be noted again that the ESP project consumed several hundred hours of volunteer efforts from Committee members, faculty and staff. One unanticipated but significant benefit was that the project provided a context for numerous faculty and staff development activities which generated positive comments from most of those involved. It is our (untestable) hypothesis that this broad based effort had positive effects which continue to reach students beyond our experimental groups and which contributed to the high baseline FTIAC retention rate mentioned above.

4. **What ongoing research is underway?**

ESP's initial research design called for a four year tracking of all 577 FTIAC's in the initial sample. Data from the first year of the project has been analyzed. Since each student was coded by group assignment (A, B or C), the within subjects longitudinal research design is rather straight forward for continued tracking of this sample. However, as discussed in the recommendations outlined below, further analysis of the data will require that one individual be given project responsibility and be granted sufficient time and resources to pursue each analysis.

Recommendations

Several recommendations can be made following the year long activities of the ESP Committee members. Most of these recommendations can be pursued independent of a decision regarding the future implementation of the ESP program.

1. Designate one individual to be responsible for further implementation and project follow-up. Appropriate release from regular duties will be required.

2. The importance and potential utility of the data base already assembled and generated by this project cannot be sufficiently emphasized. Much of this information has thus far gone unused because, at the outset of the project, requested computing and statistical resources could not be provided to the ESP Committee.

3. Continue follow-up of ESP pilot program for 4-6 years. Follow-up should begin with Fall, 1984 registrants, producing results for one year of study. Re-entry of early stop outs can be assessed.

4. Profiles can be generated for students who remained at Eastern and compared to those who left. Profile data may include demographic information, test scores and questionnaire variables. Through such analyses, one can compare student background variables (e.g., entry test scores) and the student's report of his/her experience at six weeks with re-entry status.

5. Groups may also be compared on the basis of Entering Student Survey (ESS) data as available.

6. Compare "retention rate" of 1983-84 with the two preceding and two following years to further assess the impact of the study. Compute this rate on the basis of a within subjects, longitudinal analysis. Do this by tracking students by I.D. numbers, not by attempting to extrapolate from aggregate enrollment figures which are confounded by numerous variables.

7. Students who left E.M.U. might be contacted to explore reasons for leaving. This recommendation should be considered carefully so that a useful and specific "exit interview" can be developed.

8. Clearly designate one individual to be responsible for computerized data tapes so that these tapes will be available should further study be desired.

Should ESP be continued?

Because of the high baseline Winter, 1984 re-enrollment rate in our sample (90.1%), only the research and analysis aspects of ESP are operating this semester. Because opportunities for incremental improvements in FTIAC retention with an early warning system are quite limited in such circumstances, we do recommend that a team be formed to assess the ESP program and to make whatever changes they see fit to prepare for a second pilot experiment in Fall, 1985. If base-line retention remains high, the focus of the ESP program may be modified to serve special student classifications such as adult learners.

"A good indication of a student's plans to re-enroll can be found by asking a few simple questions--and then following up..."

ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT RETENTION FOLLOW-UP

Introduction

1. **Who introduced and sanctioned the program?**

   The Academic Department Retention Follow-Up Project was designed by Dr. Ronald W. Collins, then Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, and was sanctioned by President John W. Porter in October, 1982.

2. **When did program planning begin?**

   Program planning began in September, 1982. Survey forms were developed and made available for use during advanced registration beginning in November, 1982 for the Winter, 1983 semester.

3. **When did program implementation begin?**

   The program was implemented during the 1983 Winter semester advanced registration when students were asked to complete a survey card which asked whether or not they intended to return for the 1983 Fall semester. If they answered maybe or no, they were asked to indicate why.

4. **What are the specific objectives of the program?**

   The objectives of the program are 1) to determine students' intent to return to Eastern Michigan University for the upcoming Fall semester, and 2) to provide faculty with information about their students' intent to return for the Fall semester to use in contacting students for follow-up.

Design

1. **How does the program design relate to objectives?**

   The program design relates to the objectives on a conceptual basis. Students indicate whether or not they intend to return for the Fall semester and then if they do not answer affirmatively and are not graduating, faculty contact the students to communicate the University's interest and desire to assist them return.

2. **Who is involved in delivery?**

   The Registration Office, and the Academic Department heads and faculty are involved in the delivery of this initiative.

3. **How does the program operate?**

   The Registration Office distributes and collects the survey cards during registration for the Winter semester. The data is compiled by University Computing in January. In February, the Provost distributes the survey results to each academic department and a computer list with the names and addresses of all undergraduate students majoring in the department who responded no or maybe regarding their intention to return to E.M.U. next Fall. If the reason cited is graduation, no further follow-up is required. The department heads are asked to contact individually each student listed who is not planning to graduate. All student contact is done during the Winter semester and a report is given to the Provost's office during May. In October, the University Computing runs a report which correlates the survey responses with the Fall enrollment.

4. **What does the program cost?**

   The start-up costs of the program included computer programming of the surveys and tabulation of results. On-going costs are minimal, printing of the survey and computerized tabulations are required as well as faculty and/or staff time to contact students individually.

Results

1. **How have the results been measured?**

   The results of the survey are summarized by both department and college. The results project an estimate of the probable number of returning undergraduate majors in each department

for the next year. In addition the correlations of the Winter survey responses and subsequent Fall enrollment is summarized.

2. **What is the impact this program has had on student retention?**

In 1983, 7,433 undergraduates said that they would return for the Fall, 1983 semester; 83.5 percent ((6,203) of those students enrolled. That same year, 1,231 students said that they would not return; 19.7 percent (242) enrolled, and 1,088 students said they were unsure about returning; 56.5 percent (615) enrolled.

In 1984, 8,175 undergraduates said that they would return for the Fall, 1984 semester; 81.4 percent (6,656) of those students enrolled. That same year, 1,249 students said that they would not return; 20.1 percent (251) enrolled, and 1,098 students said that they were unsure about returning; 56 percent (615) enrolled.

3. **How many students have been affected?**

Each year approximately 10,000 students have responded to the survey. Of those who responded no or maybe (2,347), 1,272 indicated that they would be graduating. None of those students were contacted. Of those who responded no or maybe and were not graduating (1,075), 295 cited financial reasons, 284 personal reasons, 97 academic reasons and 399 gave no specific reason. Generally, contacts focused on students with a grade point average of 2.5 or better. Records show that over 350 students were contacted during the Winter, 1984 semester by faculty regarding their plans for the Fall semester. About one-third were contacted personally or received a phone call, others received letters.

4. **What ongoing research is underway?**

There is no additional research underway at this time.

Recommendation

1. **Should the program be:**

__ eliminated

__ reduced

__ maintained

_X_ modified

__ expanded

The Academic Department Retention Follow-Up Project should be modified. The initial data collection through the survey card has been very effective and the tabulation of results and the correlations with Fall registration are acceptable. However, the follow-up method and reporting of those results should be re-examined and re-designed to provide greater accountability and the ability to track the results of the contact with students.

Additional research should be conducted to determine which segments contacted produce the greatest registration yield. Follow-up should be personal or via a phone call rather than by letter. Letters have produced little response. A personal contact or phone call effort concentrated on high yield segments may produce a greater result and should be considered.

"For students who have identified with the University through involvement or a job, the University can provide the incentive to persist..."

BONUS/INCENTIVES PROGRAM

Introduction

1. **Who introduced and sanctioned the program?**

   The Bonus/Incentives Program was introduced by President John W. Porter and sanctioned by the Board of Regents on May 18, 1983.

2. **When did program planning begin?**

   Program planning began in July 1982. From May to June 1983 data was collected on targeted groups.

3. **When did program implementation begin?**

   The program was implemented July 1, 1984 when letters were sent to the targeted returning students offering incentives for students to register by August 1, 1983.

4. **What are the specific objectives of the program?**

   The objective of the program is to have students register early, thereby forming a commitment to return for the Fall semester.

Design

1. **How does program design relate to objectives?**

   The program design relates to the objectives on a conceptual basis. Students are offered incentives to register early. If they are registered on the specified date the incentive promised is guaranteed.

Assumptions were made that 500 students will register early and return in the Fall semester for purely academic or personal motivational reasons. The other 10,000 will register early and return for other reasons and would have to be offered incentives in addition to quality academic programs if they are to return. The expectations were that:

1. Of the 10,000 students, 5 percent (500) can be identified as athletes and will return to participate on an inter-collegiate athletic team. Some will be awarded athletic scholarships.

2. Another 5 percent (500) are campus leaders and will return because of that involvement and a leadership incentive.

3. Still another 10 percent (1,000) are academically talented and will return to utilize a University Scholarship and/or participate in the honors program.

4. In addition, 20 percent (2,000) will return because they have been guaranteed a 15-hour on-campus job for 30 weeks if they enter into a contractual commitment by July 15 to return in the Fall. Ideally, these 2,000 students would not also be on an athletic scholarship, a campus leader award recipient, or a four-year Regents' Scholarship recipient. However, students in those three categories are also eligible for on-campus jobs.

5. Another 30 percent (3,000) students who do not fall into one of the first four categories, will be identified to receive guaranteed exclusive financial aid if they enter into a contractual commitment by July 15 to return in the Fall. Many of the students in the first four categories will also receive financial aid.

6. Many of the final 30 percent (3,000) would be offered off-campus employment if they enter into a contractual commitment by July 15 to return in the Fall.

The initiative to attract students to register early and return for the Fall 1984 semester used the first five categories. Categories 6 and 7 were modified to track the

students who have participated in the Early Warning System and the Ongoing Orientation Course. Since these students participated in these two other retention activities, additional incentives were not offered.

2. **Who is involved in the delivery?**

   The program relies on campus-wide involvement. The Division of University Relations is responsible for identifying athletes who are eligible to return the following Fall. The Office of Campus Life is responsible for identifying campus leaders, the Division of Academic Affairs in conjunction with the Office of Financial Aid identifies students receiving academic scholarships. The Career Services Center identifies students who rely upon on-campus employment. The Division of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs track students who have participated in the Early Warning System and the Ongoing Orientation Course. After all of these categories are established, all students who receive financial aid, but are not included in previously mentioned categories, are designated in the Exclusive Financial Aid Category.

3. **How does the program operate?**

   Each office communicates with their group of students eligible to return to provide incentives to register early and therefore commit to return to the University for the Fall semester.

4. **What does the program cost?**

   The start-up costs of the program included intensive computer programming time from University Computing. Ongoing program costs, independent of other established programs (ie. financial aid, student employment, scholarships), is $5,000 per year plus administrative time costs.

Results

1. **How have the results been measured?**

   The results are measured by comparing files of each student category (indicator) with processed registrations. This comparison is conducted before the incentives are offered, on the targeted deadline date and the one-tenth date (official opening report) as well as at the end of each month between April and August.

2. **What is the impact this program has had on student retention?**

In Fall, 1983, 73 percent (8,812) of the 11,999 students targeted through the program returned as of the one-tenth date (official opening term enrollment); 70 percent (7,569) of the 10,744 returned in Fall 1984. However, in 1983 an additional 1,677 undergraduates returned, while in 1984 an additional 3,286 returned. These additional students were not part of the targeted program. They did not receive incentives to register early or the structured communications which were targeted for the students designated in the program. Therefore, the number of undergraduate returning students has increased nine percent over the last two years.

RETURNING STUDENT ANALYSIS
ONE-TENTH DATE-FALL SEMESTER

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
TOTAL RETURNING UNDERGRADUATES	9,987	9,999	9,976	10,489	10,855

The program has been very successful in changing student behavior which results in more students registering early. In April, 1984, 105 percent more students were registered for the Fall Semester than in April 1980. The 2,000 student difference continues through July and then narrows to a difference of 868 (9 percent) by the one-tenth date.

RETURNING STUDENT ANALYSIS

	FALL SEMESTER			1980-84	
	1980	1982	1984	DIFFERENCE	% CHANGE
APRIL	2,281	3,578	4,680	2,399	105
MAY	3,624	4,182	5,551	2,927	53
JUNE	4,365	5,113	6,429	2,064	47
JULY	6,226	6,484	7,781	1,555	25
AUGUST	8,752	8,750	10,133	1,381	16
1/10TH DATE	9,987	9,976	10,855	868	9

3. **How many students have been affected?**

In Fall 1983, 13,676 students were affected: 11,999 students were targeted in the program. Of those targeted 73 percent

(8,812) returned. An additional 1,677 undergraduates returned who were not part of the targeted program.

In Fall 1984, 14,030 students were affected: 10,744 were targeted in the program. Of those targeted 70 percent (7,569) returned. An additional 3,286 returned who were not part of the targeted program.

4. **What ongoing research is underway?**

There is no additional research underway at this time.

Recommendation

1. **Should the program be:**

__ eliminated

__ reduced

__ maintained

_X_ modified

__ expanded

The Bonus/Incentives Program should be modified to refine the indicators and the incentives and follow-up to each student group. Additional research is required to cause/effect relationship between the incentive program and retention as well as the relationship between early registration and retention.

"No one has yet unlocked the full explanation of what motivates individual involvement on the campus..."

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT PROJECT

Introduction

The Student Involvement Project emerged from the 5th Annual Student Leadership Conference in August 1983. A small group of staff and student leader executives worked from August 1983 through April 1984 to design and implement the following intervention objectives:

1. To identify the benefits to the student and the University of strong, meaningful student involvement in the campus community.

2. To communicate these benefits to current and prospective E.M.U. students.

3. To strengthen the opportunities of involvement by revitalizing student organizations.

4. To facilitate the involvement of students by networking them to involvement opportunities.

Design and Results

The Student Involvement Project operationalized the objectives in these ways:

1. Group discussions and presentations established with several University target groups.

2. Multi-media presentation developed ("Tradition at Eastern") to build pride about E.M.U. and give information about involvement opportunities on campus.

3. 6th Annual Student Leadership Conference (August 1984) program focused on Student Organization Assessment and Health.

4. Student Government and Campus Life coordinated interventions with student organizations by designing student organization office space and development programs.

5. Orientation Planning was impacted by Student Involvement Project initiatives to refocus orientation program timing and content.

6. Fast Track, Pre-Session, Transfer Transition and Leadership Fast Track programs were developed with components to initiate the new E.M.U. student to campus involvement.

Recommendations

Student Involvement Project intervention strategy was focused on 1983-84. The Project was terminated on schedule; the results, however, have qualitatively impacted on programming related to orientation and student organization strength.

"Collaborative planning between students and administrators creates trust, shared commitment, and keeps the University in a consumer responsive mode..."

STUDENT LEADERSHIP CYCLE

Introduction

The Eastern Michigan University Strategic Planning Cycle for Student Leaders and the Division of Student Affairs was designed two years ago as a planning document to guarantee timely and effective student leadership development on our campus.

A University-wide Campus Revitalization Workshop held in the Spring of 1979, confirmed the theme of more student involvement in University decision-making. The first Student Leadership Conference, held in August 1979, was developed in response to this issue. The Fall Student Leadership Conference has continued and grown over the years. Several spin-off student leadership development programs occurring throughout the academic years have also been implemented. The Strategic Planning Cycle format was developed to insure continuity and guarantee operations.

Specific objectives of the Student Leadership Development programs as outlined in the Strategic Planning Cycle are:

-to improve personal skills of individual student leaders;

-to improve organizational skills and effectiveness;

-to create linkages between and among student leaders and student organizations;

-to renew linkages between and among student leaders and student organizations;

-to set priorities for action plans of student leadership, implement action plans and evaluate past action plans;

-to celebrate accomplishments of student leadership;

-to insure orderly exit of outgoing student leaders and integration of new leaders.

The Office of Campus Life is charged with the implementation of the Strategic Planning Cycle for Student Leaders and Division of Student Affairs Staff.

Design

Two programs from the Strategic Planning Cycle were selected as examples for this presentation.

I.	Program:	6th Annual Fall Student Leadership Conference
	Date:	August 29-31, 1984
	Place:	Camp Copneconic, Fenton, MI
	Participants:	250 (Housing student staff, University student leaders, select University faculty and staff)
	Objectives:	-to create and renew linkages -to improve student organizations' effectiveness -to prepare student leaders for the major action plan - implementation of Orientation Pre-Session and Freshman follow-up
	Cost:	$13,000
	Design:	See program materials distributed in individual sessions
	Results:	Objectives accomplished
II.	Program:	1985 Winter Student Leadership Retreat
	Date:	February 7-9, 1985

Place:	Camp Judson Collins, Irish Hills, MI
Participants:	45 (freshmen and sophomores emerging student leaders, select faculty and staff)
Objectives:	-to create linkages for new student leaders -to improve personal skills of new student leaders -to motivate new student leaders to set goals for leadership roles and design strategies for movement into leadership roles
Cost:	$3,000
Design:	See program materials distributed in individual sessions
Results:	Objectives accomplished

Results

The goal of the Strategic Planning Cycle for Student Leaders and Division of Student Affairs is to increase student involvement in University decision-making. Student leader assessment of the effectiveness of the Strategic Planning Cycle is excellent. Hundreds of students hold significant leadership roles and are involved in the programs of the Cycle; thousands of students are involved in student organizations and other involvement opportunities. Retention research indicates that the holding power for students who are involved in the campus life is significant.

Recommendations

The Strategic Planning Cycle must continue to outline our leadership development programs. The Cycle will continue to evolve as student and University needs changes.

"No effort of this type can succeed without a commitment to employee development and well-being..."

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

1. **Who introduced and sanctioned the program?**

   The impetus for a campus-wide Staff Training and Development program stemmed from the February 28, 1983 report submitted by the "Cross Campus Training Task Force." This task force submitted recommendations to the University Retention Steering Committee and strongly urged the development of a comprehensive Staff Training and Development function for the University.

   Several different proposals and organizational arrangements for a comprehensive Staff Training and Development function were presented and reviewed. In December, 1983 the Board of Regents approved the plan to house Staff Training and Development within the Department of Human Resources and to structure the program according to the proposal submitted in October, 1983.

2. **When did program planning begin?**

   Some program planning and conceptualizing began two years ago when the Cross Campus Training Task Force submitted its recommendations. However, actual program planning did not begin until the director was hired in late July, 1984. At that time, goals and objectives were established, needs assessments were begun, a comprehensive plan was initiated and long and short range goals established.

3. **When did program implementation begin?**

The Staff Training and Development program was formally launched in July, 1984 when a director was hired. The first of approximately 16 formal training workshops for Fall semester and other individualized training efforts began a few weeks later in September, 1984.

4. **What are the specific objectives of the program?**

The overall goal of E.M.U.'s Staff Training and Development program is to provide opportunities for staff to participate in learning experiences designed to change behavior to meet organizational goals.

Major objectives include:

-Serve as an expert base for such activities as needs analysis, program development, curriculum design, evaluation, and related employee development strategies.

-Create and offer a broad range of training and development programs which stress institutional policies, a knowledge of the work environment and the realization of self-worth.

-Provide self-directed, educational opportunities through such programs as tuition waiver, continuing education and self instruction.

-Initiate and direct a recognition program to acknowledge and commend employee service and dedication to the University.

-Conduct an ongoing evaluation of Staff Training and Development programs and services to assess needs and determine effectiveness.

-Provide organizational development support to the administration through problem identification and resolution.

-Promote communication and cooperation between all segments of the University community.

Design

1. **How does program design relate to objectives?**

   The Staff Training and Development program design incorporates a variety of training approaches, methodologies, and strategies to help achieve organizational improvement, increase employee performance and productivity, and generally improve the quality of worklife. These include formal training workshops and seminars, individual improvement efforts, and work with departments and units as requested.

2. **Who is involved in delivery?**

   A variety of people and resources are currently (and will continue to be) utilized to deliver training programs. These include the director and associate, on-campus personnel, outside consultants and vendors, commercial materials, and a combination of these sources.

3. **How does the program operate?**

   The Staff Training and Development office conducts needs assessments and works with an advisory committee to develop programming to address identified needs. Workshops and seminars are then developed and announced throughout campus. At present, participants are scheduled on a first come, first served basis. Procedures will be established to try to prioritize participants in order of need.

   Many other Staff Training and Development support activities such as working with individuals, departments, or special groups are arranged separately in response to requests or in identified areas of high need.

4. **What does the program cost?**

   Total budget for the Staff Training and Development function for 1984-85 is $109,000. This includes a director, an associate, SS&M, and an equipment allocation.

   Training costs per participant vary according to the type of program and the supplies, equipment, and consultant fees required. To date, costs per participant for a program have been averaging $5 - $15.

Results

1. **How have results been measured?**

   Each training function concludes with a participant evaluation/feedback form. To date, all Staff Training and Development functions have received extremely high ratings in terms of meeting the stated objectives, relevance to the job, obtaining new skills, and increasing motivation to perform one's job.

   At the end of the Fall semester, the supervisors of all employees who attended Staff Training and Development functions will be asked to evaluate whether there were any perceived differences in the employee's performance or attitude after participating in training. This data will help to document whether or not the skills and insights learned during training have transferred to the job.

   Other approaches to measure results on a larger, organization-wide basis will be undertaken through employee attitude surveys, exit interviews, grievance analysis, attendance patterns, etc.

2. **What impact has this program had on student retention?**

   The content of many Staff Training and Development programs have directly addressed the issue of student retention (i.e. Intergenerational Understanding Coping Strategies for Secretaries, Time Management, and Communication Skills). All these skills will directly improve organizational climate, efficiency, and the quality of worklife. At the present time, no specific measures of impact on retention are available.

3. **How many students have been affected?**

   The Staff Training and Development program is not designed to involve students directly. Student involvement may be possible when a workshop is offered that impacts a student as an employee. A student is a member of the Staff Training and Development Advisory Committee.

4. **What ongoing research is underway?**

   Evaluation data is being obtained on the workshops themselves, transfer of skills to the job, and on organizational improvement.

Recommendation

The Staff Training and Development program should be maintained. The first few months of operation have resulted in over 400 people being involved in formal training programs. As indicated previously, many of these programs are designed to develop or improve skills which will positively impact how employees deal with students.

Future programs will address the issue of student retention even more directly. For example, a Train the Trainer program will assist those employees who train student workers. Similarly, programs on organizational change and the change process will help those who are involved in leading retention efforts to understand the entire process in terms of an organizational improvement/change process.

The first few months of operation of the Staff Training and Development program have been very positive and productive. The future looks bright for continued positive impact on student retention and other organizational and human resource improvement initiatives.

"Now we are ready to bring our findings to the attention of those who are equally committed to improving the quality of life for everyone on the campus..."

EVALUATION AND IMPLICATIONS

Effect on Overall Retention Rate

Development of a meaningful baseline retention rate for the University is a critical step in planning and assessing retention initiatives. The difficulty involved in doing so has been described elsewhere (Burkhardt, 1982) and reflects problems of definition, study type and the absence of a relationship between research and the intervention models currently in use.

The need for a retention rate in this context derives from the motivation to improve retention rather than the defensibility or comparability associated with research. Consequently, we have chosen to adopt standards which meet appropriate criteria for a working formula of retention in this setting:

A) The formula must be logically derived and valid.

B) The formula must be reasonably simple to understand and to explain.

C) The formula must be accessible using available data.

The work of a number of E.M.U. faculty and administrators has yielded a formula that meets these criteria. It provides us with a rate of student retention that measures our performance on the explicit goal set for retention by the President and Board (.70 retention of all undergraduates from one year to the next), and yields a Fall semester to Fall semester estimate of overall undergraduate student retention. It accounts for graduation and balances the effect of Winter, Spring and Summer additions to the Fall enrollment pool (see Chart 1).

Performance in terms of the University formula has been measured over four years. Results show a rather stable retention rate that is in keeping with the University goal of over 70 percent retention (see Chart 2).

Working Formula for Establishing an Overall Retention Rate for Eastern Michigan University

P = Pool G = Graduates R = Retention Rate n = Current Year

E = Enrollment N = Net Enrollement T = Transfer Students n-1 = Immediately Prior Year

$R_{expected}$ = Average of R for All Previous Years R_{new} = Retention Rate for Current Year

Chart 1

$$P_n = E_{Fall_{n-1}} - (G_{Fall_{n-1}} + G_{Winter_n} + G_{Spring_n} + G_{Summer_n})$$

$$N_n = E_{Fall_n} - \{(FTIACS + T)_{Winter_n} - (FTIACS + T)_{Spring_n} - (FTIACS + T)_{Summer_n}\}R_{Expected} - (FTIACS + T)_{Fall_n}$$

$$R_{new} = \frac{N_n}{P_n}$$

Chart 2

Fall to Fall Semester Retention at Eastern Michigan University 1981-1984

	1981	1982	1983	1984
Previous Year Enrollment	13,991	14,033	14,148	14,876
Previous Year Graduates	1,999	2,086	2,096	2,010
Previous Year Pool	11,992	11,965	12,052	12,866
Current Year Enrollment	14,033	14,148	14,876	15,027 a)
W/S/S/ New • (Expected R	961	1,316	1,385	1,360
Fall New	3,944	4,110	4,332	4,172
Current Year Net	9,228	8,722	9,159	9,486
Net ÷ Pool (New R)	.77	.73	.76	.74

a) Based on one-tenth date. All other enrollment figures are based on final semester totals which are generally higher.

Measuring the Retention of Freshmen Students

Several of our retention initiatives are targeted to affect FTIAC students. Consequently, the overall rate described above does not offer a baseline for analysis with this target group. A longitudinal study of this performance is now in progress.

We do have two important indications of what this rate might be. A relatively sophisticated study was conducted by the Office of Institutional Research in 1979 and referenced in Rodgers, Green, and Spatta's 1980 report on persistence at Eastern Michigan University. Using Markov chain analysis, the first year Fall to Winter retention rate for freshmen was determined to be above .80 for the Fall 1978-Winter 1979 semester (Rodgers, Green and Spatta, 1980). While the mechanisms are available to replicate this analysis, no individual or office at the University has yet done so. Therefore we are left to make assumptions about its reliability.

A second measure of the freshman Fall to Winter retention rate is available through analysis of a control group selected from the 1983 class as a part of the Eastern Success Project. Drawn as a random sample of all FTIAC's, the control group represents in every important way the population which it is drawn. The retention rate for this group from Fall 1983 to Winter 1984 was 87.7 percent (Dansky, Barclay, and Burkhardt, 1984).

Successful tracking of these two primary indicators of retention (overall rate and freshman survival rate) will offer specific feedback on the success of our Freshman Strategy. Such information will be available during the Summer, 1985.

Implications

The success of our retention initiatives can be a source of great pride for everyone of us at the University. Already we can point to the campus-wide mobilization for retention as one of several tough challenges the University has met during this decade of advancement. With each success, we are further encouraged to approach our future boldly, with optimism and with confidence.

The challenge which prompted our retention strategy remains with us. The University must continue to be responsive to the needs of students while understanding and optimizing the dreams, talents, and energy of its faculty and staff as well. The challenges that lie ahead, then, are every bit as important as those we've already addressed.

- -Information about the University's retention initiatives will be shared with the entire campus community.

- -Continuing research on the effectiveness of retention initiatives will be encouraged.

- -New student populations, particularly adult learners and graduate students, will be given particular focus in planning for campus retention.

- -The satisfying and effective use of cross-divisional project teams will be recognized and built upon.

The next steps in our campus mobilization will include institutionalization of specific initiatives, continuing innovation in key areas, and the renewal of the inspiration, individuals and ideas that brought such energy to our campus community.

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The University Retention Steering Committee recognizes and commends the hundreds of individuals who have contributed to the University's success in the field of student retention. The names of the individuals below, and the many others who have supported their efforts with advice, relief help, and timely encouragement, deserve all of the credit for meeting this challenge.

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES FOR IMPLEMENTING RETENTION PROGRAMS

John Burkhardt, Student Affairs and
Donald Loppnow, Social Work, Co-Chairs

Subcommittee: ONGOING ORIENTATION, COURSE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY
Purpose: To develop and implement a pilot Ongoing Orientation course aimed at improving student retention.
Members:
Patricia Weber, Chair
Dennis Beagen
Glenna Frank Miller
Chuck Fulford
Thomas Gwaltney
Louise Jernigan
Donald Loppnow, Resource Person
Cal Michael

Subcommittee: EARLY WARNING, TRACKING AND INTERVENTION
Purpose: To implement a pilot early warning system aimed at improving student retention.
Members:
Jeff Dansky, Chair
Rosalyn Barclay
John Burkhardt, Resource Person
Robert Grady
Shirley Houseman
Joe Jorfi
Karen Moses
Roselle Wilson

Subcommittee: RETENTION COMMUNICATIONS AND EVALUATIONS
Purpose: To develop and implement a plan for routine communications with the University community regarding retention efforts.
Members:
Ellen Gold, Chair
Velma Clark
Mary Green
Tobi Hanna-Davies
Mary Kauper, Resource Person
Dennis LeFond
Frank McHugh
Paul Moniodis

FAST TRACK COMMITTEE
Purpose: To design and implement a program enrolling prospective freshmen and providing support for their decision to attend Eastern.
Members:
John Burkhardt, Chair
Rita Abent
Gary Evans
Ann Kettles
Kathryn Orscheln
Ken Riopelle
Janice Seale
Judith Tatum
Patricia Weber

UNIVERSITY PRE-SESSION COMMITTEE
Purpose: To design and implement an intensive three-day orientation to the University for new students at the beginning of the academic year.
Members:
John Burkhardt, Co-Chair
Glenna Frank Miller, Co-Chair
Rita Abent
Robert England
Michael Kulczycki
Dennis LeFond
Mary Jean Schumann

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD
Purpose: To provide direction and leadership for University efforts aimed at developing employee skills, attitudes and quality of work life.
Members:
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John Burkhardt, Vice-Chair
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LEADERSHIP OF THE STUDENT BODY

Gerald Curtis, President, 1982-1983
David Taylor, President, 1983-1984
Dawn Schumann, President, 1984-1985

The many University Clerical and Secretarial Staff who provided special guidance and organization for this effort, particularly

Marion Black
Charlene Hunt
Diane Schick

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